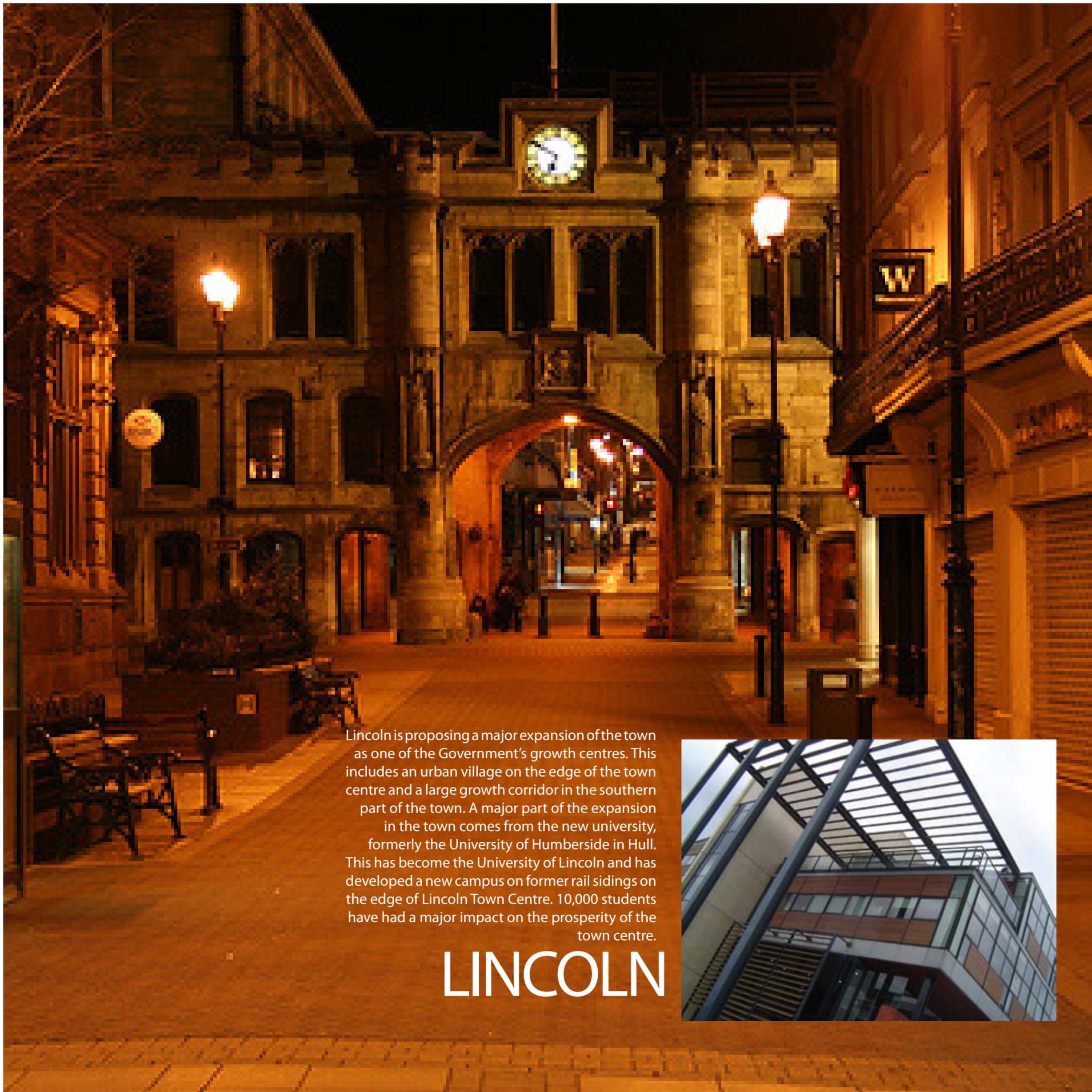


05

Where we outline the themes that should shape the vision for Crewe. Precedents are used for each theme to further illustrate the idea and show how it has been successfully achieved in other places.

STRATEGIC THEMES





Lincoln is proposing a major expansion of the town as one of the Government's growth centres. This includes an urban village on the edge of the town centre and a large growth corridor in the southern part of the town. A major part of the expansion in the town comes from the new university, formerly the University of Humberside in Hull. This has become the University of Lincoln and has developed a new campus on former rail sidings on the edge of Lincoln Town Centre. 10,000 students have had a major impact on the prosperity of the town centre.

LINCOLN



INCREASING POPULATION

Crewe has a growing population and the volume of new development on the fringes of the town attests to a demand for it to grow further. This growth needs to be managed to ensure that it does not exacerbate congestion problems. However generally the demand from housing developers wanting to build in the town should be seen as an opportunity to be exploited.

The town centre in particular is an under-exploited residential asset and it should be considered as a growth area for housing. This will increase the number of people living within easy reach of the centre, increasing the potential number of customers for town centre businesses and leisure uses.

An important component of this is the student body of Manchester Metropolitan University. Despite its proximity to the town this operates as a separate campus. However with the expansion of the facility and the potential of 5,000 students in the town there is an opportunity to develop student accommodation in the centre.

There are opportunities to develop new residential neighbourhoods to the north of the town centre along West Streets and in the mill Lane development towards the station. Both of these areas could provide a range of accommodation. However we have assumed that this would include a significant proportion of housing rather than apartments.

This residential development is important in reinforcing the town centre, increasing activity and spending power as well as physically redeveloping the town centre fringes to transform the appearance of the town centre.





Coventry railway station is similarly cut off from its city centre because of its position, an intrusive ring road and a shatter zone of poor quality development. The city have been working for a number of years to restructure this shatter zone with the development of new housing and leisure attractions. A recent masterplan by Terry Farrell involves redesigning the train station as the heart of a new mixed-use quarter to create a welcoming gateway to the town.

COVENTRY

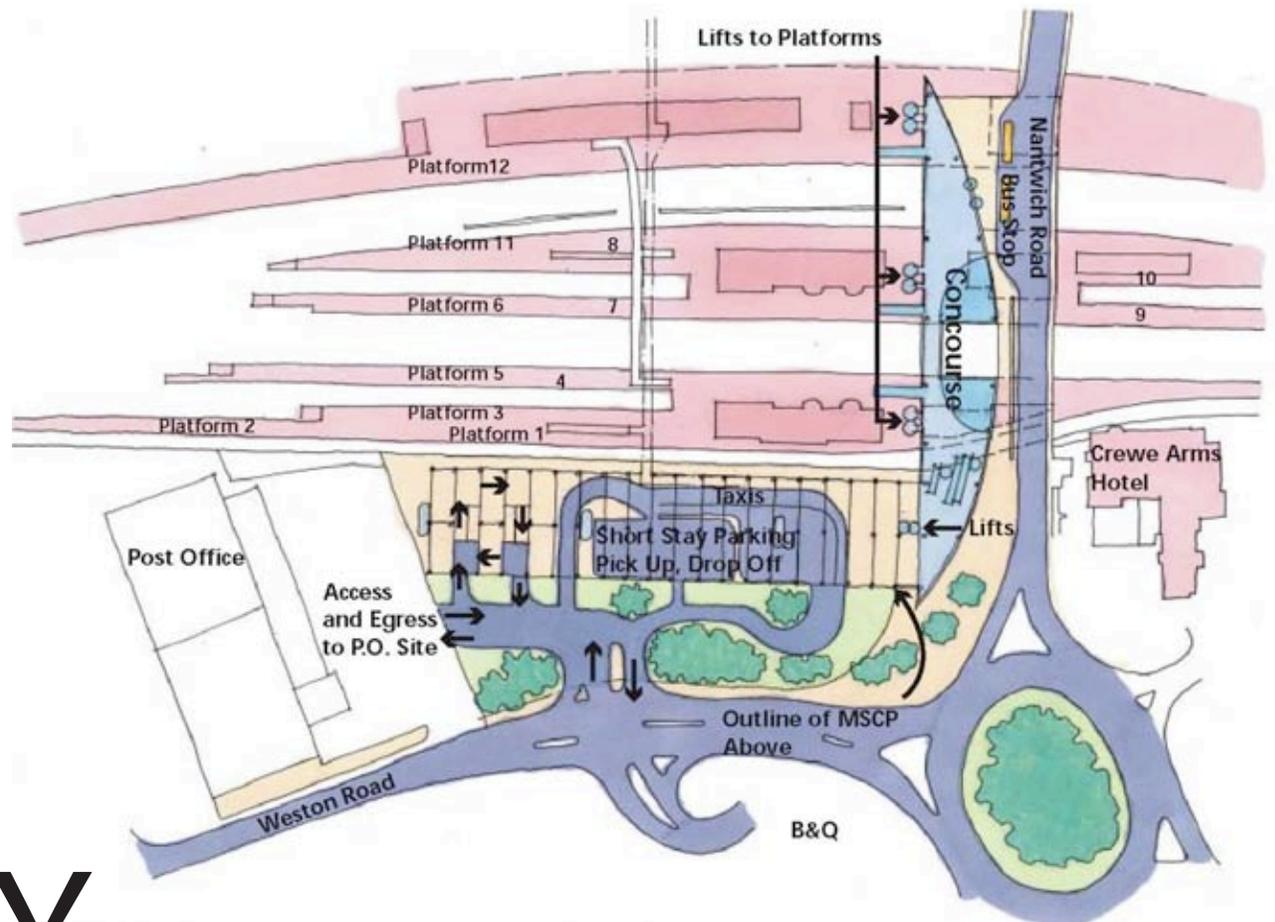
Crewe only exists because of the railway station. It grew as a town in the early Victorian era because of its crucial role as a junction on the railway system. This gives it unparalleled accessibility that should be the impetus for its future growth.

There have been discussions in recent years about the future of the station. The Crewe Rail Gateway Scheme has looked at a major refurbishment for the station, designed by BDP, that would create a 21st century gateway to the town.

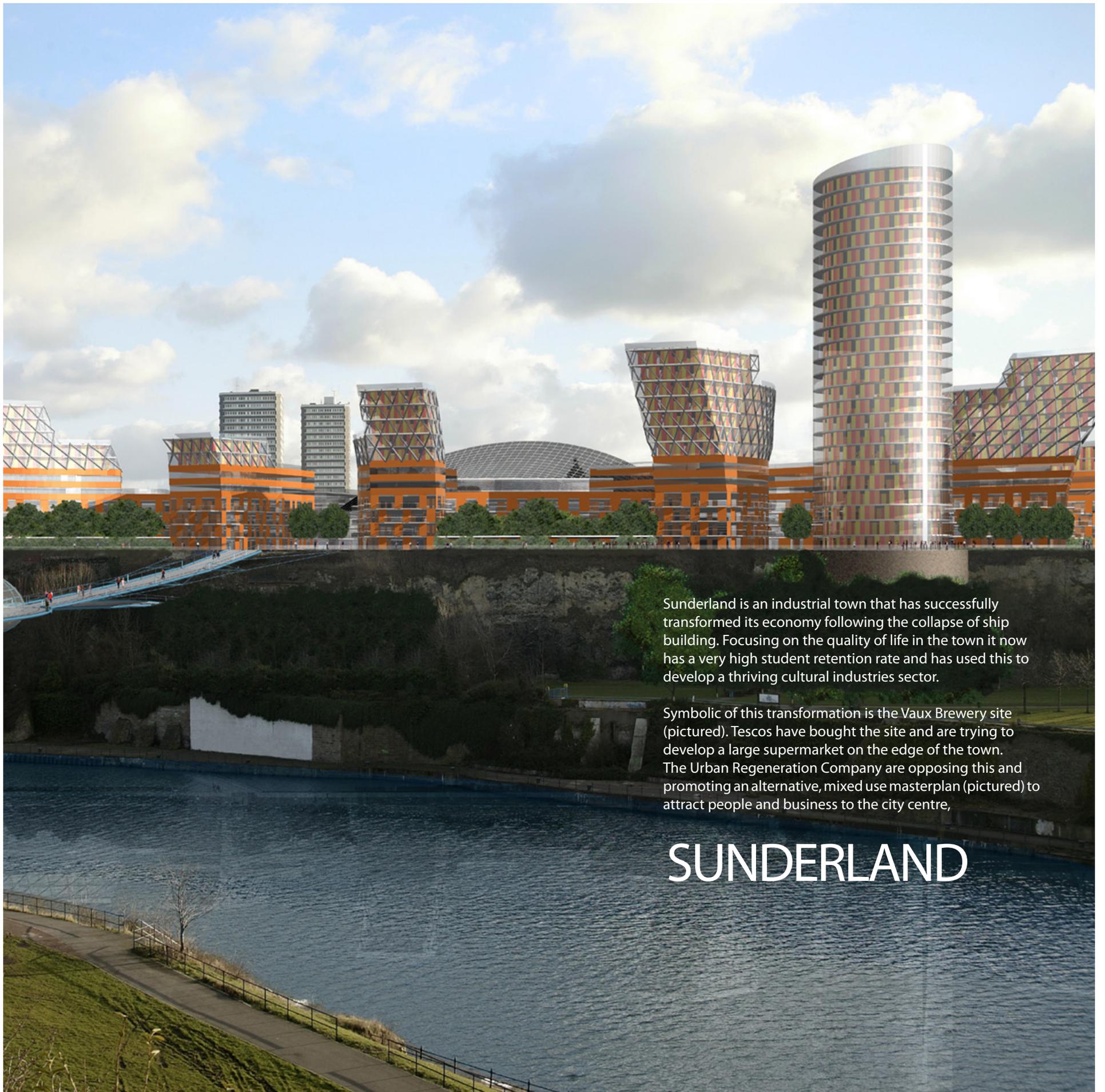
An alternative scheme would see the station redeveloped at Basford East, approximately a mile to the south of the current station. This latter scheme is being considered purely because of the efficiency of trains passing through the Crewe junction.

Having considered these options as part of this masterplan we can see only disbenefits to the town as a result of the relocation of the station. This will disconnect it completely from the town centre and make it more difficult to attract residents, businesses and other activities (such as MMU) to the town. We therefore believe that it is important for the council to lobby for the refurbishment of the existing station and its refurbishment as an iconic structure for the town. This could be linked to a major piece of sculpture to emphasise Crewe's gateway function to the millions of people who pass through the town by rail.

If it is not possible to prevent the relocation of the station, it is vital that the new station retains the name Crewe. It would need to be developed as a 'Parkway station' - like Bristol Parkway or Birmingham International with extensive parking and a rail link back into the town centre 'halt' station.



GATEWAY



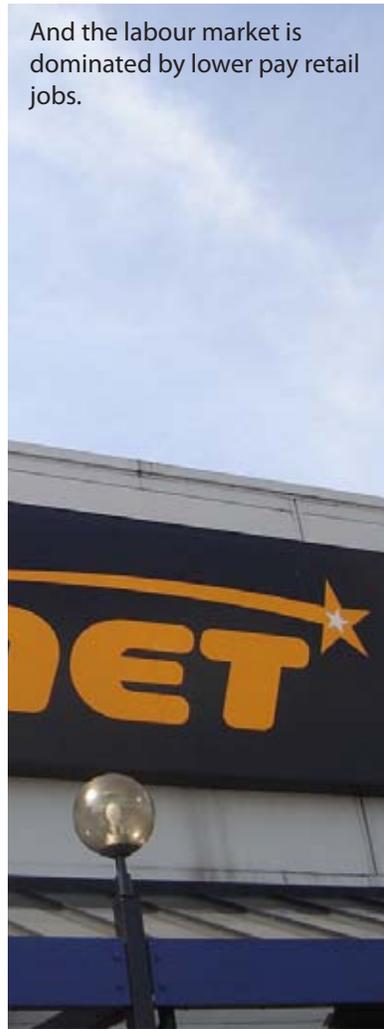
Sunderland is an industrial town that has successfully transformed its economy following the collapse of ship building. Focusing on the quality of life in the town it now has a very high student retention rate and has used this to develop a thriving cultural industries sector.

Symbolic of this transformation is the Vaux Brewery site (pictured). Tesco's have bought the site and are trying to develop a large supermarket on the edge of the town. The Urban Regeneration Company are opposing this and promoting an alternative, mixed use masterplan (pictured) to attract people and business to the city centre,

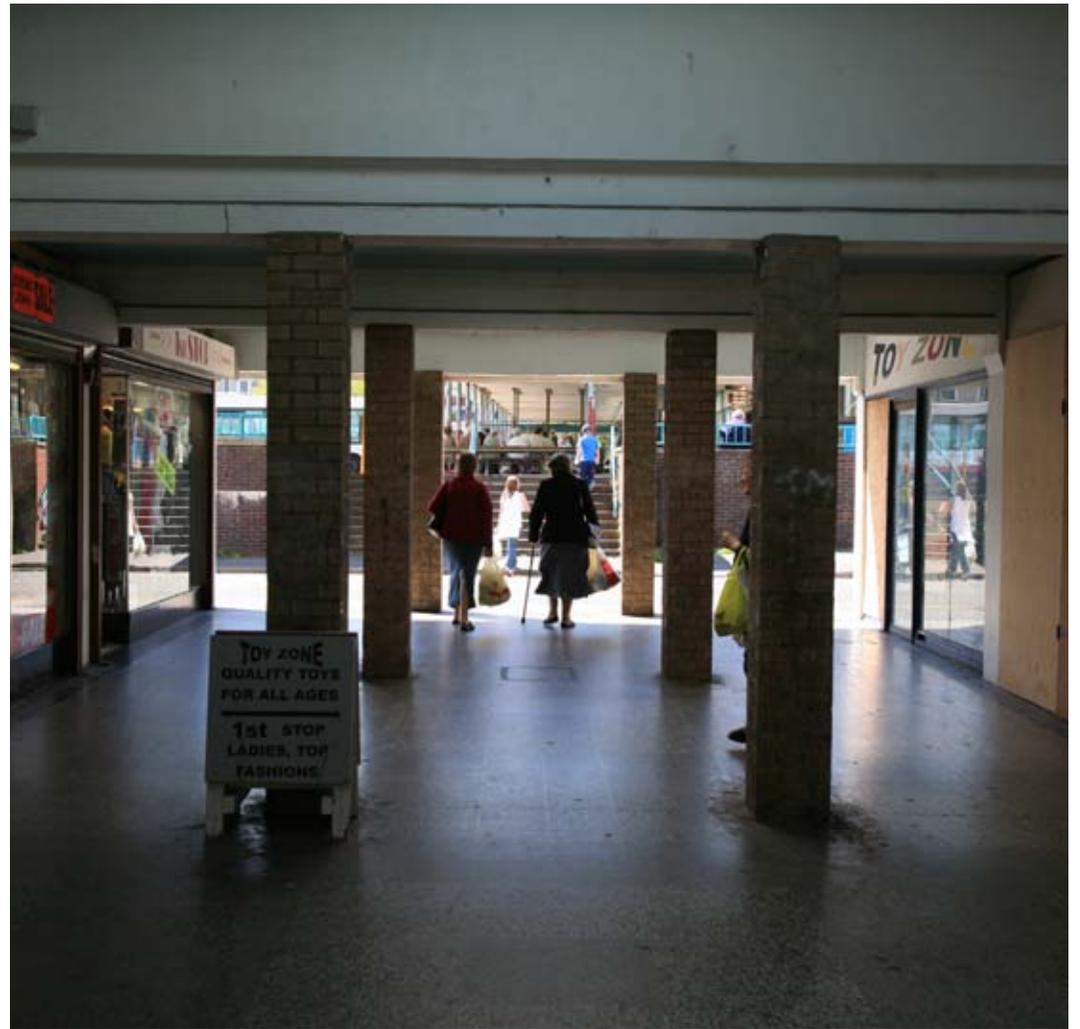
SUNDERLAND



The commercial space provision in Crewe does not currently meet the needs of modern business.



And the labour market is dominated by lower pay retail jobs.



Crewe sits in rural Cheshire, a county with a high concentration of wealth and mobility. This means that there is plenty of wealth within easy reach of the town and the aim of the regeneration strategy should be to attract some of this into the town centre. Crewe's key assets in achieving this are its accessibility and affordability. However at present these are outweighed by its poor quality environment and negative image.

There are many ways in which the town can attract wealth. One is to attract people to live in the town as described in the first theme. In a world where couples often work in different cities, Crewe could become a convenient commuting base. In doing this it would import

wealth into the town from elsewhere. There is also potential to encourage students studying nearby to settle in the town after their studies, increasing the pool of skilled, educated people.

Attracting wealth also means bringing people in to shop and socialise in the town centre. It needs to develop a distinctive offer that doesn't try and compete head on with Nantwich but is attractive to shoppers because of the range of shops, its convenience and the pleasure of the experience.

Attracting wealth also means attracting companies. This no longer necessarily means fishing for large inward investors, because there are not many of these about. It is rather

about encouraging an indigenous business. This relates to the increased population. As Crewe increases the range of people living in the town and the number of students staying on it will become more attractive to employers and will increase the number of people likely to work from home, start small businesses etc... As the larger cities become more expensive other attractive, accessible and affordable places – which Crewe could become – will attract business relocations. Crewe must diversify its economy in this way to increase the diversity and quality of employment in the town so that in the future it is able to both attract and generate wealth.

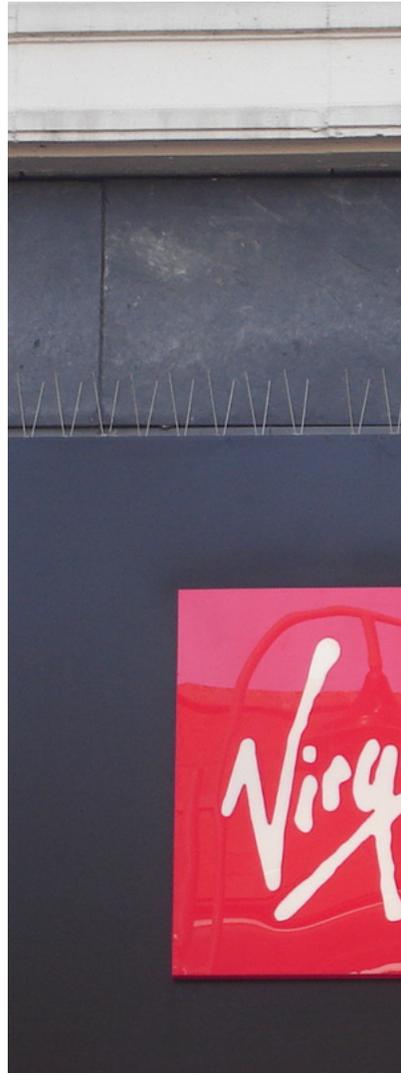
ATTRACTING WEALTH

The redevelopment of the shopping centre in Boston has created a modern retail environment while also integrating into the fabric of the town. The shops trade onto real streets with a mix of use so that the town centre is able to provide a range of attractions rather than becoming a purely shopping destination.

BOSTON



Crewe contains a large number of national retailers that dominate the distinct local character of the town.



If Crewe needs to attract more people to spend more money in the town centre it needs to broaden its attractions. This relates to its shopping offer as well as a range of leisure and cultural activities

The Cheshire Town Centre Study showed that Crewe's overall market share was just 8.7% within the Cheshire region. This will increase with the development of the Modus scheme in the town centre and it is important to build on this to attract more spending power to the town.

The nature of retailing is changing and town centres now need to compete with both out of

town provision and on-line retailing. Crewe has a huge amount of 'big box' retailing on the edge of the town centre including two supermarkets and the Grand Junction Retail Park. If people visiting these shops are to be attracted into the town centre it will be important to provide a distinctive offer.

Many traditional town centres have successfully competed with out of town retailing. They have done this by offering different experience with a range of national and independent retailers and bespoke local businesses alongside cultural and leisure uses. If Crewe is to do this it will need to build on the Modus development to create a genuine town centre experience across the

centre. There will need to be a particular focus on Market Street and Victoria Street to ensure that they do not become a poor relation to the shopping centre. There is potential to develop these areas as a focus for independent retail, evening uses and restaurants. The latter would build on the leisure experience within the town centre including the cinema complex, the cluster of bars on High Street, the Lyceum and the Limelight (subject of a recent documentary highlighting its national importance).

BROADENING ACTIVITIES

Wakefield, like Crewe is developing a new shopping centre, a joint venture between Simons and Modus. This however is only part of a broader town centre transformation including masterplans for the waterfront and the station. A new market hall is under construction designed by David Adjaye and the Barbara Hepworth gallery designed by David Chipperfield. In order to ensure that this development is coordinated across the town centre the council has commissioned a streetscape design manual from Gillespies. This sets out specifications for each of the types of street in the town centre. This will not all be implemented at the same time but will ensure that over time a consistency of approach is taken.

WAKEFIELD



ENVIRONMENT

The first three themes are dependent on the quality of the experience when visiting the town centre. At present the quality of set pieces like Municipal Square is not reflected in the quality of the rest of the centre and indeed in the city centre fringes.

There is a need to use the developments around the town centre as a catalyst for transforming the quality of the public spaces in the town centre. This needs to be based on a clear network and hierarchy of streets and

public spaces that links to the surrounding neighbourhoods. The hierarchy of these streets will determine the level of treatment so that there is a logical and comprehensible network of spaces with consistent treatment throughout the town centre. This needs to be linked to a signage, street furniture and legibility strategy.

There are not of course the resources to do this all at the same time. However the problem in the past is that schemes done at different times have used different materials and styles of street

furniture. A consistent streetscape handbook building on the treatment uses in Municipal Square and the plans for the Modus scheme will allow this level of treatment to be extended over time through the whole of the town centre.

Municipal Square is an exemplar for Crewe's public realm.



Delamere Square will be improved under future plans by Gillespies.



Gormley's Angel Of The North sculpture at the gateway to Tyneside has shown the power of dramatic and large scale public art in shaping perception of a place. The same effect could be achieved with a piece of work on the West Coast Main Line through Crewe. .

GATESHEAD



IMAGE

Crewe is a brand. In the consumer age our towns and cities are more than just places with physical boundaries, they signify identity, ethos and lifestyles. The Crewe brand has never been very strong and has been damaged by unsympathetic development over the years. There is a need to create and project a much more positive image for the town so that it is seen differently by potential shoppers, residents, businesses and investors.

Place branding is partly about logos, brochures and marketing campaigns. These however are not what is required at the moment. To be

effective campaigns to change the image of a place need to be rooted in real change. In this there is a role for striking architecture (like the David Adjaye market hall in Wakefield), for public art, visitor attractions and events. The physical transformation planned in Crewe in the coming years is a real opportunity to create buildings that will change the image of the town.

The most important opportunity in this respect is the station. The railway is integral to Crewe's image and the redevelopment of the station as a striking piece of architecture and arrival

experience would do more than anything else to change the image of the town both to people who stop at the station and to the many more who pass through. Indeed the visibility of the town to millions of train passengers is a realm opportunity to project a positive image of the town just as the Angel of the North does to travellers on the M1 in Gateshead.

What do Crewe's buildings, streets and spaces say about the town, its ambition and its future?



Crewe's railway station is part of the town's brand. Its location and future redevelopment are key to the town's long term growth.



VISION



Crewe – Gateway to the north

A thriving town centre used by people from across the county because it is convenient, attractive and pleasant to use. A strong retail centre that is also lively in the evening with a range of cultural and leisure uses. A place that is attractive as a place to live and a convenient commuting base for nearby cities. A town that over time nurtures strong business base through home grown firms and as a convenient place for companies to relocate.

A place to go to rather than a town to go through.